

PLYMOUTH PORT HEALTH AUTHORITY
REPORT OF THE MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH

DR. T. PEIRSON

1955

This report is in the form and sequence prescribed for Annual Reports of Medical Officers of Port Health Authorities by the Ministry of Health, Form Port 20, dated October, 1952.

During the year, the most cordial relations have been maintained with the Customs, Immigration and other officials concerned with the work of the Port of Plymouth, and co-ordination is happily maintained through the medium of the Port Health Inspector, Mr. A.S. Kitt.

The number of ships entering the Port increased by 98 to 1779 (Section II - Table B) though the tonnage decreased by 201,538 to 2,486,498 tons.

There was some increase in the outward and inward passenger traffic (Section III - Table C) largely arising from the series of voyages by the M.V. "VENUS" from Plymouth to Madeira.

The amount of rat infestation on board ship and on wharves and warehouses continues to decrease (Section XII - Table E). In 1955, no rats were found on board ship, and only 227 were destroyed in warehouses, wharves etc., compared with 299 destroyed on ships, and 822 destroyed ashore in 1945.

SECTION I - STAFF.

TABLE A.

Name of Officer.	Nature of appointment.	Date of Appointment.	Qualifications.	Any other appointments held.
T. Peirson	Port Medical Officer.	5.12.32.	M.D., M.R.C.S. L.R.C.P., D.P.H.	Medical Officer of Health, City of Plymouth.
G.B. Carter	Deputy Port Medical Officer.	5.7.48.	M.D., D.P.H.	Deputy Medical Officer of Health, City of Plymouth.
H.B. Boucher	Part-time Port Medical Officer.	1.5.50.	M.B., F.R.C.S., D.T.M. & H.	Assistant Medical Officer of Health, City of Plymouth.
A.S. Kitt	Port Health & Food Inspector.	3.2.47	Sanitary Inspector's Certificate. Meat & Other Foods Certificate.	-

11. STATIONER'S MARK

12. STATIONER'S MARK

13. STATIONER'S MARK

14. STATIONER'S MARK

Address and Telephone number of the Medical Officer of Health:

Port Health Office : Millbay Docks, Plymouth.

Tel. Plymouth 63821, Ext. 245 by day.

Tel. Plymouth 61441, at night and week-end.

City Office : Seven Trees, Lipson Road, Plymouth.

Tel. Plymouth 61081, by day.

Tel. Plymouth 61441, at night and week-end.

SECTION II - AMOUNT OF SHIPPING ENTERING THE DISTRICT DURING THE YEAR.

TABLE B.

Ships from	Number.	Tonnage.	Number inspected		Number of ships reported as having, or having had during the voyage infectious disease on board.
			By the Medical Officer of Health	By the Sanitary Inspector	
Foreign Ports	757	1,873,600	166	509	13
Coastwise	1022	612,898	-	709	-
Total	1779	2,486,498	166	1218	13

SECTION III-CHARACTER OF SHIPPING AND TRADE DURING THE YEAR.

TABLE C.

Passenger Traffic:

Number of passengers INWARDS 23,846

Number of passengers OUTWARDS 4,253

The total number of passengers remaining on board passenger-carrying vessels entering the Port of Plymouth (exclusive of those shown above) was 36,727.

Cargo Traffic:

Principal IMPORTS -

Foreign:

Fertilisers from Ghent, Antwerp and Hamburg.
Basic Slag from Rouen and Dunkirk.
Phosphates from Sfax, Casablanca, Antwerp, Ghent and Rouen.
Potash from Sfax, Hamburg, Antwerp and Bremen.
Fresh fruit from Holland and Italy.
Preserved Meats from Holland.
General foodstuffs from Holland.
Onions from Roscoff and Holland.
Timber from Vancouver, Gothenburg, Kotka and Hamburg.
Grain from Vancouver, Antwerp and Rouen.
Oyster shells from Frederikssund.
Fuel Oil from Trinidad, Abadan and Aruba.
Slates from St. Malo.
Coal from Rotterdam, Calais, Rouen and Dunkirk.

Coastal:

Coal from South Wales and North-East Ports.
Gas Oil from Avonmouth, Thameshaven, Swansea, Hamble and Fawley.
Benzine from Southampton and Fawley.
Motor Spirit from Southampton and Fawley.
Fuel Oil from Swansea, Grangemouth, Hamble and Southampton.
Fertilisers from Middlesborough and Immingham.
Cement and Asphalt from London.
China Clay from Fowey, Charlestown and Par.
Grain from Avonmouth, Newport (I. o. W.) and King's Lynn.
Potatoes from Belfast, Kilkeel and Dundrum.
Fish from Deep sea Fishing Grounds.
Margarine, fats, Sauces, Syrup, Tinned Fruit, Flour, Jam, Biscuits and Rice from Liverpool.
Coffee, Tinned Vegetables, Cereals, Tinned Milk and Meat from Glasgow and Belfast.

Principal EXPORTS -

Granite chippings and China clay.

Principal Ports from which ships arrive:

Asia and Australasia.

Adelaide
Auckland
Calcutta
Melbourne
Port Pirie
Rangoon
Singapore

Europe.

Amsterdam
Antwerp
Bergen
Boulogne
Bremen
Brest
Calais
Cherbourg
Dunkirk
Gothenburg
Hamburg
Kotka
Rotterdam
Rouen
Roscoff

America.

Aruba
Baltimore
Boston
Buenos Aires
Cristobal
Montevideo
New York.
Newport (R.I.)
Paramaribo
Valparaiso

Africa.

Beira
Bona
Cape Town
Casablanca
Mombasa
Sfax
Takoradi
Tangier
Trinidad

SECTION IV - INLAND BARGE TRAFFIC.

There is no inland barge traffic at the Port.

SECTION V - WATER SUPPLY.

- (a) The source of water supply for the Port, British Railway Docks, Cattedown, and Sutton Harbour is from Plymouth Corporation Water Department hydrants on the wharves.
- (b) Shipping is supplied with water from either the hydrants on the wharves or from the water-boat "ENA". The water-boat supplies are taken from Corporation hydrants.

SECTION VI - PUBLIC HEALTH (SHIPS) REGULATIONS, 1952.

(1) List of Infected Areas. (Regulation 6).

A list of Seaports and Airports in which a confirmed or suspected quarantinable disease has occurred is supplied weekly by the Ministry of Health. Copies are typed and sent to the Chief Pilot, H.M. Customs, and to all the boarding Medical officers.

(2) Radio Messages. (Regulation 13).

(a) There are no arrangements for sending permission by radio for ships arriving from foreign ports to enter the district, except for foreign warships and Royal Naval Auxiliary vessels, which are in radio communication with the Plymouth Naval Base, and report their state of health prior to entering the Port. Other vessels anchor in the Sound, which is a recognised mooring station, and are there boarded.

(b) Regulations 14 (1) (a) and (2).

(b) Vessels landing passengers, and any vessels requiring the attention of the Port Medical Officer, usually wireless their time of arrival at the Port and the state of health on board to the Agents. The latter then inform the Port Health Authority, and, in the case of vessels landing passengers, give the time that the tender will be leaving the wharf to deal with the vessel, which usually anchors in the Sound. The Medical Officer boards the vessel by means of the tender or the Port Health Launch, whichever is most convenient. If there are any infectious conditions aboard, the vessel is required to give preliminary radio warning, either to the Port Health Authority or to the local Agents in accordance with Regulation 14 of the Public Health (Ships) Regulations, 1952.

(3) Notifications otherwise than by radio. (Regulation 14 (1) (b).

Vessels entering the Port requiring the Port Medical Officer, fly the appropriate flag and are boarded in the Sound by the Medical Officer and the Inspector by means of the Port Health Launch, which is prepared to land cases if necessary.

After office hours, information concerning ships entering the Port flying a signal for the Port Medical Officer is received from the Queen's Harbourmaster, H.M. Customs or Royal Naval Authorities.

(4) Mooring Stations. (Regulations 22 to 30).

Jennycliffe Bay in Plymouth Sound is used as a mooring station in the case of vessels which intend entering the Docks. As the larger liners lie off in Cawsand Bay or just inside the Breakwater, the usual anchorage is regarded as a mooring station.

(5) Arrangements for :

- (a) Hospital accommodation for infectious diseases (other than smallpox).

Cases of infectious disease landed from vessels are admitted to the Scott Isolation Hospital, Beacon Park Road, Plymouth. Cases suffering from Tuberculosis may be accommodated by arrangement at the Mount Gold Orthopaedic Hospital, Plymouth, if unfit to travel to their home address.

- (b) Surveillance and follow up of contacts.

Where necessary, the names and intended destinations of passengers disembarking from a ship who are contacts of infectious disease are forwarded to the Medical Officers of Health in the appropriate districts.

- (c) Cleansing and disinfection of ships, persons, clothing and other articles.

When cases of infectious disease are removed from ships in the motor launch "ARGUS" to hospital ashore, the quarters on board are disinfected with Formalin.

Clothing, bedding etc., are conveyed to the Scott Isolation Hospital, for disinfection in the Washington-Lyons Steam Disinfector.

SECTION VII - SMALLPOX.

(1) Isolation Hospitals available.

The first case or cases would be admitted to the Smallpox Hospital, Liskeard, Cornwall (Telephone: Liskeard 2385) staffed from the Scott Isolation Hospital, Plymouth (telephone: Plymouth 64311 and 61437. Physician-Superintendent : Dr. D.F. Johnstone).

Should it appear likely that more extensive accommodation would be required, arrangements would be made for the Lee Mill Smallpox Hospital, at present used for convalescent Orthopaedic cases, to be re-opened as a Smallpox Hospital.

(2) Arrangement for the transport of cases to hospital.

The launch "ARGUS" of the Plymouth Port Health Authority based at Millbay Docks, Plymouth (Telephone: Plymouth 62821 Ext. 245 by day and Plymouth 61441 at night and week-ends) is available to transport cases from ship to shore. The launch is equipped with a radio transmitter and receiver linked to the Plymouth Ambulance Headquarters.

The crew were re-vaccinated in December, 1952, and are now about to be re-vaccinated. Ambulances of the Plymouth City Council's Ambulance Service (Telephone: Plymouth 64101) are available to transport cases to hospital.

(3) Smallpox Consultants.

Plymouth and Cornwall : Dr. A. F. Joinstone, The Scott Isolation Hospital, Plymouth.
Telephone : Plymouth 64311, 61437 and 61558.

Devon and Cornwall : Dr. A. A. Lister, 7, The Crescent, Plymouth : Telephone: Plymouth 65761 and Devonport 40.

Devon and Cornwall : Dr. C. Seward, 20 West Southern Hay, Exeter. Telephone Exeter 2110 and Exmouth 4120.

(4) Facilities for the Laboratory Diagnosis of Smallpox.

Materials for the collection of specimens from suspected cases are always available at the Port Health Office, Plymouth.

Specimens would be forwarded to the Virus Reference Laboratory, Central Public Health Laboratory, Colindale Avenue, London, N.W. 9.

SECTION VIII - VENEREAL DISEASE.

All ships coming into the Docks are boarded by the Port Medical Officer or Inspector, and where necessary, information is supplied concerning venereal diseases. Pamphlets are issued to seamen setting out the times and days of the Venereal Disease Clinics at the South Devon and East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth, together with directions showing the route from the Docks to the Clinic.

The days and hours of attendance for males are as follows:

Monday : 8 to 7.30 p.m.
Tuesday: 10 to 11.30 a.m.
Wednesday: 10.30 to 12 noon.
Thursday: 8 to 7.30 p.m.
Saturday: 6 to 7.30 p.m.

During the year, 53 British and 22 Foreign seamen were treated at the Venereal Diseases Clinic.

The Nationalities were as follows:-

British	..	..	..	..	53
Dutch	..	..	..	..	17
Spanish	..	..	..	..	2
Maltese	..	..	..	..	3

SECTION II - CASES OF SHIPBORNE AND OTHER INFECTIOUS DISEASES AT THIS PORT.

TABLE 2.

Category	Disease.	Number of cases during the year		Number of ships concerned
		Passengers	Crew	
Cases landed from ships from foreign ports	Chickens	1	-	1
	Typhoid	1	-	1
Cases which have occurred on ships from foreign ports but have been disposed of before arrival	Small-pox	-	1	1
	Typhoid fever	1	-	1
	Chickens	2	1	1
	Common measles	2	-	2
	Typhoid	2	-	2
	Fertile	1	-	1
Cases landed from other ships	-	-	-	-

SECTION I - CASES OF THE DISEASES OF MALARIA IN SHIPS.

There were no cases of malaria brought to notice in ships arriving at Plymouth during the year.

SECTION II - MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST SHIPS INFECTED WITH OR SUSPECTED OF BEING INFECTED.

No plague infected or suspected ships arrived at the Port during the year.

SECTION III - MEASURES TAKEN AGAINST RATS IN SHIPS FROM FOREIGN PORTS.

(1) All ships arriving at the various wharves are boarded by the Port Health Inspector, and enquiries made of the officers and crew as to evidence of rat infestation. Foremen Stevedores are also questioned as to the presence of rats. Where rat infestation is found, trapping or poisoning is carried out by the Health Officer.

(2) All rats caught are destroyed, and specimens are submitted to the City Bacteriologist for examination for evidence of plague. During the year, four rats were examined, with no evidence of plague infection.

(3) Detering of ships is carried out by fumigation with hydrogen sulphide gas. These fumigations are carried out by private firms under the supervision of the Port Health authority.

The names of Commercial Contractors who have carried out the fumigation of vessels at this Port are :

1. Fumigation Services Ltd., Barking, Essex.
2. London Fumigation Co., London, E.C.3.

No necessity arose for the fumigation of a ship during 1933, but in the future, if the infestation were small and the vessel was staying a sufficient period of time, the use of warfarin instead of H.C.N. would be considered.

or "1080"

(4) During routine inspection of vessels, the Port Health Inspector calls the attention of the responsible officials to any part requiring rat-proofing. When rat infestation is found, the owner is advised to substitute metal sheathing and expanded metal in place of wooden casings and sheathings round pipes, electric wires etc., at a point where they pass through bulkheads or from one compartment to another, and to rat-proof provision storerooms and other compartments where necessary. In general, new vessels are found to be satisfactorily rat-proof.

TABLE E.

No rodents were found during the year in ships from foreign ports.

Rodents destroyed during the year in Docks, piers, wharves and warehouses.

Category.	Number.
Black rats	87
Brown rats	145
Species not known ..	-
Sent for examination..	4
Infected with plague..	-

TABLE F.

Deratting Certificates and Deratting Exemption Certificates issued during the year for ships from foreign ports.

No. of Deratting Certificates issued					Number of Deratting Exemption Certificates issued.	Total Certificates issued.
After Fumigation with		after trapping	after poisoning	Total		
HCN	Other fumigant (state method)					
1.	2	3	4	5	6	7
-	-	-	-	-	32	32

Prevention of Disease by Pests Act, 1949. Application to Shipping Order, 1951.

Under the above Regulations, 2 Rodent Control Certificates were issued to coastal vessels, found free from infestation with rats and mice.

SECTION XIII - INSPECTION OF SHIPS FOR MOLLUSCS.

TABLE 6.

Inspections and Notices.

Nature and number of inspections	Notices served		Result of serving Notices
	Statutory Notices	Other Notices	Complied with
1218 vessels inspected	Nil	15	10

SECTION XIV - PUBLIC HEALTH (SHELL-FISH) REGULATIONS, 1934 and 1945.

Under the above Regulations, the following are prohibited areas for gathering mussels, cockles, winkles, limpets, and other shell-fish for human consumption by an order made in 1936 :

Hooe Lake.
The Hamoaze, including West Mud.
St. John's Lake.
Off Torpoint Institution.
Weston Mill Lake.
Off Rat's Island.
Mouth of St. Germans River.
Off Saltash.
River Tamar and its tributaries.

Notice boards are maintained in these areas warning persons that the taking of shell-fish for sale for human consumption is forbidden.

No formal action has been necessary under the Regulations.

All oysters from the Tadm oyster Fisheries are, by a voluntary agreement, subjected to a cleansing process before sale.

SECTION XV - MEDICAL INSPECTION OF ALIENS.

- (1) List of Medical Inspectors of Aliens holding Warrants of Appointment.

Dr. T. Pearson.
Dr. G. S. Carter.
Dr. T. H. Harrison.
Dr. W. A. Matheson.
Dr. H. B. Boucher.
Dr. L. K. Trethowan.
Dr. T. A. C. Forrest.

- (2) List of other staff engaged on this work:

Nil.

(3) Organisation of work :

All ships carrying aliens are boarded by the Medical Officer during the course of duty under the Public Health (Ships) Regulations, 1957. At the same time, aliens are inspected as they pass before the Immigration Officer, and the Medical Officer is available for consultation as necessary with the Immigration Officer.

The great majority of the work in connection with the Medical Inspection of Aliens is carried out by the Deputy Port Medical Officer and the Assistant Port Medical Officer, the remaining Officers performing occasional relief duties.

(4) Nature and amount of aliens traffic :

Much of the traffic is composed of incoming passengers from the United States of America, with a small number from Far Eastern Ports and the West Indies. Outgoing traffic is mainly composed of emigrants to Canada and Australia.

During the year, the number of incoming aliens was 7,479, and the number of outgoing aliens was 52.

(5) Accommodation for medical inspection and examination :

A room for medical examination is provided in the Port Health Office.

SECTION XVI - MISCELLANEOUS.

Arrangements for the burial on shore of persons who have died on board ship from infectious disease.

Disposal of the dead is carried out under conditions prescribed by the Medical Officer of Health in accordance with the nature of the disease. The Public Mortuary is available to accommodate bodies if necessary. Cremation is advocated and is available, locally.

Disposal of cases landed at the Port :

Infectious Diseases:

No major infectious Disease occurred within the area of the Authority during 1955.

Cases landed at the Port :

1. 14th January. One American passenger, suffering from pneumonia was landed from the M.V. "VENUS", and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Greenbank, Plymouth.
2. 25th January. One British passenger, suffering from Chicken-pox was landed from the M.V. "VENUS", and proceeded by car to Hayle, Cornwall.

Cases of non-infectious disease were dealt with as follows :

1. 13th January. One of the crew of the S.S. "CORBURN" was landed, suffering from stomach pains, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
2. 1st February. One British passenger, suffering from a fracture of right femur, was landed from the M.V. "VENUS", and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.

3. 11th February. One British passenger, suffering from Insanity, was landed from the S.S. "PORT WILHELM", and admitted to Moorhaven Hospital, Bittaford.
4. 12th February. One of the crew of the Norwegian vessel M.V. "VENUS" was landed, suffering from Appendicitis, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Greenbank, Plymouth.
5. 19th February. One Greek passenger was landed from the S.S. "CHALLENGER", suffering from Influenza, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
6. 5th March. One of the crew of the Dutch vessel M.V. "YSTRUM", was landed, suffering from a neck injury, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
7. 21st March. One Jamaican passenger, suffering from Pyrexia, was landed from the S.S. "FAIRFAX", and admitted to the Scott Isolation Hospital, Beacon Park Road, Plymouth.
8. 14th April. One British passenger, suffering from Heart Disease, was landed from the S.S. "CITY OF LONDON", and proceeded by car to Kent.
9. 16th April. One British passenger, suffering from Heart Disease, was landed from the S.S. "ANTON", and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
10. 16th April. One British passenger, suffering from Coronary Thrombosis, was landed from the S.S. "ANTON", and proceeded by car to Leicester.
11. 16th April. One British passenger, suffering from Heart Disease, was landed from the S.S. "ANTON", and proceeded by rail to London.
12. 16th April. One British passenger, suffering from Angina, was landed from the S.S. "RHODESIA STAR", and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
13. 7th May. One Irish passenger, suffering from Schizophrenia, was landed from the S.S. "ITALIA", and admitted to Moorhaven Hospital, Bittaford.
14. 17th May. One of the crew of the Dutch vessel M.V. "WILLY", was landed, suffering from Appendicitis, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Greenbank, Plymouth.
15. 4th June. One British passenger, suffering from Insanity, was landed from the S.S. "ITALIA", and admitted to Moorhaven Hospital, Bittaford.
16. 19th June. One British passenger, suffering from Insanity, was landed from the S.S. "ITALIA", and admitted to Moorhaven Hospital, Bittaford.
17. 3rd July. One British passenger, suffering from Insanity, was landed from the S.S. "LOCH GARD", and admitted to Moorhaven Hospital, Bittaford.
18. 3rd July. One British passenger, suffering from Schizophrenia, was landed from the S.S. "ITALIA", and admitted to Moorhaven Hospital, Bittaford.
19. 3rd July. One British passenger, suffering from Schizophrenia, was landed from the S.S. "ITALIA", and proceeded by rail to Grangeegorman Mental Hospital, Dublin.

20. 12th August. One of the crew of the Swedish vessel, "ARNOLD BRATT" who died on board from Heart Disease, was landed for cremation at Plymouth.
21. 23rd August. One American passenger, suffering from Acute Appendicitis was landed from the S.S. "ILE DE FRANCE", and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Greenbank, Plymouth.
22. 9th September. One Italian passenger, suffering from a wound of the left forearm, was landed from the S.S. "LIBERTE", and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Greenbank, Plymouth.
23. 2nd November. One of the crew of the Colombian vessel, S.S. "CIUDAD DE CUCUTA", was landed, suffering from Appendicitis, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
24. 3rd November. One of the crew of the Swedish vessel, S.S. "ARNOLD BRATT", was landed, suffering from Appendicitis, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
25. 11th November. One of the crew of the Dutch vessel, M.V. "YSTROOM", was landed, suffering from a Gastric Ulcer, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Greenbank, Plymouth.
26. 15th November. One British member of the crew of the M.V. "KANDAW", was landed, suffering from Appendicitis, and admitted to the South Devon & East Cornwall Hospital, Freedom Fields, Plymouth.
27. 15th November. One British member of the crew of the M.V. "KANDAW", was landed, suffering from Inguinal adenitis, and proceeded to his home in Edinburgh.
28. 16th December. One British passenger, who died at sea from Heart Disease, was landed from the S.S. "REINA DEL PACIFICO", and removed by car to Guildford, Surrey.
29. 18th December. Two British passengers, suffering from Insanity, were landed from the S.S. "ITALIA", and admitted to Moorhaven Hospital, Bittsford.

Food Inspection.

During the year, 320 vessels were dealt with under the Public Health (Imported Food) Regulations, 1937 & 1948.

There were 137 from foreign ports and 183 coastwise.

The total amount of foodstuffs voluntarily surrendered and condemned as unsound, unwholesome and unfit for human consumption consisted of :-

81 sacks of Wheat	6 Tons 0 cwt 0 qrs 9 lbs.
7 Cartons of Cheese	3 qrs 21 lbs.
Total..	6 Tons 1 cwt 0 qrs 2 lbs.

No action was taken under the Public Health (Imported Milk) Regulations, 1926, and the Public Health (Preservatives, etc., in Food) Regulations, 1925 to 1948.

The following specimens were submitted to the Public Health Laboratory, Greenbank, Plymouth, for examination :-

Nature of Specimen.	From.	Examined for.	Result.
4 Black Rats	Various Warehouses.	Plague	No evidence of Plague.
Sea Water	Anthony Passage	B. Coli	Coliform Bacilli 1600 per 100 ml. Faecal Coli - 20 per 100 ml.
Oysters	Anthony Passage	B. Coli	No faecal coli isolated.
Oysters	Anthony Passage	Copper content	Report not yet received.

